

## A Conversation with Comedians

Key and Peele talk about their show on Comedy Central

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*Key and Peele* is one of Comedy Central's newest sketch comedy shows, which has just started its second season this past September. It stars former *MADtv* actors Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele in previously taped sketches.

One of their most popular sketches is President Obama and his anger translator, Luther.

"Clearly we are Obama supporters," said Peele. "We take the approach of what we think will make people laugh and what people are thinking, but no one's saying."

The duo was lucky enough to meet the President this year, who told them that he needs Luther.

"He's a human being, it was very humbling," said Key. "He was warm and lovely. The thing that we do about him actually resonated with him."

Key and Peele wish to leave a legacy of helping to remove racism, which is their greatest dream.

"We look optimistically to the future and we want the idea of race to be obsolete," said Key. "It's a practical fantasy that people fifty years from now will show their children our show and they'll say it's really old fashioned, antiquated, out of touch, antique. Things are evolving very fast."

The concepts for their sketches are generated by a writing staff, but take on a new life through the comedy Key and Peele play off of. They use a lot of observations of human behavior and human expectations in their sketches.

"We take what people think will happen and turn it in another direction," said Key.

Peele says the comedy comes from one key part of the scene.

"What we do, we find the nugget of the scene, the driving part that makes it fun, funny," said

Peele. "That nugget is the hardest to find."

There is not a single type of character that the two comedians refuse to play. Peele's main focus in performing is that he can play anybody, and Key likes to look at the physical nature of a sketch.

"What can I do in this sketch physically instead of verbally?" said Key. "Instead of words there can be actions."

Their show has received some criticisms, but Key and Peele have taken well to them and feel as if they are natural reactions by misguided people.

"There are people who don't want us to use the n-word in our comedy," said Key. "A lot of criticisms were from people who didn't grasp the sketch and didn't understand it."

Key and Peele met right before working on *MADtv* in Illinois, where Peele was hired late 2003 and Key was hired in early 2004.

"We're as close as you get," said Key.

The duo draws their comedic inspiration from a variety of sources, such as television dramas like *Breaking Bad*, and the British sketch comedy duo of Mitchell and Webb.

"You can't really live in the twentieth century and not be affected by Eddie Murphy's comedy," said Peele.

Despite critics, Key and Peele plan to continue their comedy in their own way.

"I think our show is like a sketch show should be," said Key, "and that's scary to people who are old fashioned."